

United Arab Emirates

The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** is a federation of seven emirates situated in the southeast of the Arabian Peninsula in Southwest Asia on the Persian Gulf, bordering Oman and Saudi Arabia. The seven states, termed emirates, are Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah, Sharjah and Umm al-Quwain.

The UAE, rich in oil and natural gas, has become highly prosperous after gaining foreign direct investment funding in the 1970s. The country has a relatively high Human Development Index for the Asian continent, ranking 31st globally, and had a GDP purchasing power parity of \$200.5 billion in 2009 according to the IMF.

Before 1971, the UAE were known as the Trucial States or Trucial Oman, in reference to a nineteenth-century truce between Britain and several Arab Sheikhs. The name Pirate Coast was also used in reference to the area's emirates in the 18th to early 20th century

History

The United Arab Emirates was originally formed from tribally-organized Arabian Peninsula sheikhdoms along the southern coast of the Arabian Gulf and the northwestern coast of the Gulf of Oman. It had been part of Oman and was then called Oman's Gulf. The UAE was established in 1971 when the emirates bonded together and became one united country. It has since evolved into a modern, high-income nation.

Geography

The United Arab Emirates is located on the Southeast of the Arabian Peninsula, bordering mainly the Persian Gulf and partially the Gulf of Oman, as well as the countries of Oman and Saudi Arabia. The country's north-easternmost tip is an enclave belonging to Oman and forms the strategically located Strait of Hormuz, a vital passage for much of the world's crude oil. UAE's total area is approximately 77,700 square kilometers with 1,318 km of coastline. However, its exact size is indeterminable as much of the border area with Saudi Arabia lies on the Rub al Khali (Empty Quarter) desert and remains undemarcated. Additionally, island disputes with Iran and Qatar remain unresolved.

The UAE comprises seven emirates of which Abu Dhabi is the largest accounting for 87 percent of total area and the smallest is Ajman at only 259 square kilometers. Its lowest point lies at the Persian Gulf (0m) and the highest point is an unnamed knoll across the border from Jebel Bil Ays in Oman reaching 1910m.

Climate

The desert weather of the United Arab Emirate is hot and dry throughout the year, with very little rainfall. The brief winter months (*December - February*) do bring some mild cooling, especially in the hills and mountains of the northeast. Summer high temperatures (*July - August*) reach the low 100s, while winter low temperatures seldom drop below 40^o F.

Population: 4,798,491

Currency: U.A.E. dirham

Living as an expat – Housing

There's a wide range of apartments and villas available in UAE, both within and outside enclosed compounds. Most accommodation is in urban or suburban areas; the desert is for camels and the Bedouin. Most visitors are pleasantly surprised when they see the city of UAE for the first time, its

modern architecture co-existing with traditional houses and ancient wind-towers. New buildings are often spectacular, as oil has provided the money for the best architects, builders and materials. Indeed, there's competition between developers, who tend to be wealthy merchant families, to build the most impressive structure.

Getting there around

Dubai and Abu Dhabi are the country's main international airports, though an increasing number of carriers serve Sharjah as well. There are also small international airports at Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah and Al-Ain, primarily used by charter flights. There is no departure tax when leaving by air.

Well-maintained Dubai Transport minibuses or buses serve all the emirates but the only route that takes passengers on the return trip is Sharjah. The rest of the buses go back to Dubai empty. Equally well-maintained Al Ghazal buses travel between Dubai and Abu Dhabi, and Dubai and Al-Ain, as well as within the Abu Dhabi emirate. There is now an excellent frequent inter-Emirate bus service between Dubai and Abu Dhabi. This is the most comfortable way to travel.

Driving is by far the best way to see the UAE, allowing you to get off the major highways and onto the more interesting back roads and giving you the freedom to stop as you please. Major roads in the UAE are excellent; multilane highways link the cities and have lighting along their entire length.

More information

For more information on Global Relocation Consultants (GRC) expat relocation services and mobility management please visit our website: www.grconsultants.org